

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELFAS 00352 051232Z

54

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1448

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 352

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: STRIKE BY FIREMEN PERTURBS BUSINESSMEN

1. BELFAST PROFESSIONAL FIREMEN BEGAN WILDCAST STRIKE OCTOBER 1 IN PROTEST ABOUT INACTION OVER LONG-STANDING DEMAND FOR FIVE POUND STERLING PER DAY PER MAN EXTRA "DANGER MONEY." FIREMEN'S ACTION COMMITTEE IS DEFYING UNION CALL TO RETURN TO WORK PENDING OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS. FIVE POUNDS PER DAY IS, OF COURSE, FAR IN EXCESS OF RAISE PERMISSIBLE UNDER U.K.-WIDE CEILING AND GOVERNMENT WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WHILE UNOFFICIAL ACTION CONTINUES.

2. STRIKE BEGAN WITH FIREMEN REFUSING TO ANSWER CALLS STEMMING FROM TERRORIST ACTIONS IN BOMBING COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS PREMISES. REFUSAL TO RESPOND HAS NOW BEEN EXTENDED TO AMUSEMENT PREMISES SUCH AS CINEMAS AND PUBS UNLESS THERE IS A DANGER TO HUMAN LIFE. FIREMEN PROMISE CONTINUED SERVICE TO HOSPITALS, PRIVATE HOMES AND SUCH INSTITUTIONS AS SCHOOLS AND RETIREMENT HOMES. FULL-TIME FIREMEN LONDONDERRY HAVE NOW JOINED BELFAST COLLEAGUES IN PROTEST. FIRE-FIGHTING SERVICES NOW BEING PROVIDED BY PART-TIME (VOLUNTEER) FIREMEN AND SOME REGULAR UNITS FROM

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PAGE 02 BELFAS 00352 051232Z

SURBURBAN AREAS. ACTION COMMITTEE HAS POINTED OUT HOWEVER THAT

PRESENCE IN BELFAST OF UNITS FROM OUTLYING AREAS IN EMERGENCIES
LEAVES THESE HOME AREAS UNPROTECTED. FIREMEN NEAR LONDONDERY
HAVE ANNOUNCED THEY WILL NOT RESPOND TO FIRES IN CITY.

3. SECURITY FORCES IN BELFAST AREA HAVE INCREASED MOBILE
PATROLS AND ROAD-BLOCKS AND AUGMENTED NUMBER OF PERSONNEL ON
STREETS TO INHIBIT MOVEMENT OF BOMBERS. THIS HAS DONE LITTLE
TO ALLAY APPREHENSIONS OF BUSINESSMEN HOWEVER AND ONLY COUREAGOUS
ACTIONS BY AN INDIVIDUAL FIRE INSPECTOR, A POLICEMAN AND,
OCTOBER 4, ONE DISSIDENT BELFAST UNIT, HAVE PREVENTED SERIOUS
SPREAD OF FIRES BEGUN BY BOMBS.
SPICER

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